

Sunnah Compilation | Al-Mustadrak Of Abu 'Abdullah Al-Hakim Al-Naysaburi | Omar Abdl-Haleem

THE COMPILER OF the Hadith work, *Al-Mustadrak*, is Abû ʿAbdullâh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullâh Al-Ḥâkim. He committed to memory a great number of narrations and is an acknowledged critic of narrations, in addition to authoring a number of compilations. He was born in the year 321 *h* and passed away in the year 405 *h*.

The Condition of the Composer and Methodology of His Book

Al-Ḥâkim, may Allah have mercy on him, said, in his introduction:

A contingent of the people of knowledge in this city and other cities have requested that I compose a book that contains or includes all the *aʿâdîth* that are narrated with narrations that Muhammad ibn Ismâʿîl [Bukhârî] and Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjâj [Muslim] consider as strong narrations.

Ibn Al-Balâʿ, the well-known Hadith scholar said:

Al-Ḥâkim took care to gather authentic *aʿâdîth* in his book, and these *aʿâdîth* are either *aʿâdîth* at the level established by Bukhâr and Muslim, or *aʿâdîth* that he deems authentic even though they may not attain to the level of Bukhâr.

Scholarly opinion regarding Al-Ḥâkim's methodological approach in his book varies.

- **Ibn Al-Balâ** said: “He (Al-±âkim) is too easy in his criteria of authenticity for *a^âdîth*. His conditions are too lenient. It is, therefore, best for us to be moderate about accepting his rulings. We should be prepared to adjudge *a^âdîth* he has rated |*a^î* as *^asan a^âdîth* (a second grade of reliable *a^âdîth*).”
- **Al-çIrâqi** said of Al-±âkim’s *Al-Mustadrak* that the latter’s claim to have only included in his book |*a^î* *a^âdîth not found* in either Bukhâri and Muslim is undermined by the inclusion of many *a^âdîth* that are, in fact, present in either Bukhâri or Muslim, such as the *^adîth* on the authority of Abû Saçîd Al-Khûdri, that the Prophet œ said: Write nothing from me save the Quran. This *^adîth* is also narrated by Muslim. Muslim has narrated this *^adîth* in the chapter of “Al-Zuhd” (Asceticism). He notes that **Al-Dhahabi** gathered in his book *The Summary of Al-Mustadrak* many of the *a^âdîth* that are in *Al-Mustadrak* and also in Bukhâri and Muslim.
- In addition, **Al-çIrâqi** also said that Al-±âkim, when he states, ‘I have gathered the *a^âdîth* of the narrators of Bukhâri and Muslim,’ he means by this the caliber of narrators that Bukhâri and Muslim chose, not the exact people they chose.
- **Ibn ±ajar** comments on this statement of Al-çIrâqi. He states:

The works of **Al-±âkim** show that when Al-±âkim narrated a *^adîth* that had the same narrators as those used by Bukhâri and Muslim, he would say: ‘*βa^î*, and up to the standard of Bukhâri, Muslim, or both of them.’

When the *^adîth* had one or more narrators that were not specifically used in Bukhâri or Muslim, then he would simply state: ‘An authentic chain of narrations,’ without declaring it to be up to the standard of the former two compilers.

An example of this occurs when Al-±âkim narrates a *^adîth* in the chapter of “Al-Tawba” (Repentance). He states that the Prophet œ said: Mercy is not stripped away from anyone but those of Hellfire [meaning that such is a characteristic of people in life destined for this condemned end]. Al-±âkim says of this *^adîth* that it has an authentic chain of narrators. Abû çUthmân (one of the narrators of this *^adîth*) is not Abû çUthmân Al-Nahdi. Rather, he is another Abû çUthmân. Had he been Al-Na^di, then this *^adîth* would have attained the criteria of Bukhâri and Muslim [and been duly noted as such by Al-±âkim]. This shows that Al-±âkim only judged that a *^adîth* reached the criteria of Bukhâri and Muslim if all the narrators themselves were used by Bukhâri and

Al-±âkim sometimes mistakenly adjudged some *a^âdîth* as attaining the criteria of Bukhâri and Muslim, though some of their narrators were not used by Bukhâri or Muslim. This, however, occurred by way of mistake on the part of Al-±âkim, as an unintentional error rather than as a part of his method of classification. And Allah knows best.”

Abû ʿAbdullah Al-Dhahabi, a well-known scholar of Hadith, the author of many well-known books, the most famous of which are his *Târîkh Al-Islâm*, *The History of Islam*, and *Siyar Aʿlâm Al-Nubalâʾ*, *Biographical Sketches of the Noble Scholars*, both of which assess Hadith narrators, states:

I heard the scholar **Al-Mâlini** say: ‘I read the book *Al-Mustadrak* through and through, and I did not find a single *ʿadīth* in it that reached the criteria of Bukhâri or Muslim.

Al-Dhahabi commented on this statement of Al-Mâîni, saying:

This is an extreme opinion that is belied by the reality of Al-ʿĀkim's book. Nor is Al-Māḷīnī qualified enough to make this judgment. Rather, *Al-Mustadrak* has a large number of *ʿadīth* that reach the criteria of both Bukhārī and Muslim, and he also has a large number of *ʿadīth* that reach the criteria of one or the other of them.

Indeed, a little less than a third of the *a^ʿādīth* in *Al-Mustadrak* attain the criteria of both or one of them. An additional fourth of the book contain *a^ʿādīth* that do not reach the criteria of Bukhâri or Muslim, but which are nevertheless authentic. The remainder of the book contains strange and doubtful *a^ʿādīth*. Al-Dhahabi gathered these doubtful *a^ʿādīth* into a separate compilation of its own.

Furthermore, he asserts that Al-ʿākim's book is beneficial—enough to compose a summarized version of Al-ʿākim's book *Al-Mustadrak*, which he himself states is in need of revision and editing.

Ibn al-Jarir states, commenting on this statement of Al-Dhahabi:

This is a general statement that needs to be further specified and clarified. It is more accurate to say that *Al-Mustadrak* can be divided into parts and every part can be further subdivided.

The first part are the *a^adîth* that have the exact same narrators that Bukhâri and Muslim use. It has no defects in the chain or transmitters or in its Texts. Nor is there any *^adîth* in *Al-Mustadrak* that fulfills this criteria save that Bukhâri and Muslim have the same *^adîth*, or one that is close to it in meaning, or at least a *^adîth* that fulfills the same purpose.

[Basically, Bukhâri and Muslim gathered all the *âdith* that reach their criteria, leaving out only *âdith* that had a repetitive meaning or a few exceptions.]

The second division, and this comprises the majority of the book, is made up of *aʿādīth* that have narrators that are used by Bukhārī and Muslim, although they did not use them for establishing the authenticity of a *ʿādīth*. They used them only to affirm other narrators, but not to stand on their own. Most of these *aʿādīth* are authentic; however, it is not proper to say they reach the criteria of Bukhārī and Muslim, since, in fact, they did not use them as their principal narrators. Al-ʿākim usually claims that these *aʿādīth* are at the criteria level of Bukhārī and Muslim, but they are not. Hence, the critique of Al-ʿākim's claims are valid when it comes to equating these *aʿādīth* to the standard of Bukhārī and Muslim, but the critique that these *aʿādīth* are not *ḥaḍīṯ* is invalid.

The third section are *aʿādīth* that have narrators that are not to be found anywhere in Bukhâri or Muslim, nor does Al-ʿâkim claim that they are at the criteria level of Bukhâri or Muslim, except on rare, mistaken occasions. He rates these *aʿādīth* as authentic. Yet most of these *aʿādīth* are weak. This is why scholars have criticized him as being too lenient in his judging of his *aʿādīth*.

Some scholars have excused Al-±âkim for the leniency and mistakes in his book in terms of his judgment regarding Hadith authenticity. About this Ibn ±ajar says:

These mistakes occurred in Al-±âkim's book because he first compiled a rough draft [known in Arabic as a *musawwadah*]. Then he passed away before going through the book and editing it. About halfway through the second volume of his book, I have found

written in this place:

Here ends the dictation of Al-±âkim.

Thus what comes after this, Al-±âkim must have acquired through *çijâza* (authorization [in some second-hand form], not through [direct] listening [to a shaykh], for the mistakes in the dictated parts of the book are far less than the ones taken by *çijâzah*.

As stated previously, Al-Dhahabi summarized *Al-Mustadrak* and added his own judgment of the *a^âdîth* in it. He also gathered, not all, but just its very weak *a^âdîth* into a separate composition.

The scholar, **Ibn Al-Mulaqqin** compiled a concise biography of all the narrators of *Al-Mustadrak*, along with the biography of other narrators, in his book called *Ikmâl Tahdhîb Al-Kamâl, Completion of the Digest of 'the Completion.'*

Ibn ±ajar organized *Al-Mustadrak's* *a^âdîth* into alphabetical order based on the beginning words of each *^adîth*. Ibn Al-Mulaqqin also wrote a summary of *Al-Mustadrak*, printed in six volumes (meaning he excerpted from *Al-Mustadrak* the *a^âdîth* that he deemed important).